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SUBJECT: MFA PLANS FOREIGN POLICY DIALOGUE

¶1. (SBU) Summary: FM Carrion has announced his intention to develop a foreign policy strategy for 2005-2020. He intends to build support for the strategy through a series of topical seminars over the coming year. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) PolChief and PolOff met on November 8 with Ambassador Javier Ponce, President of the Ecuadorian Diplomatic Association, to discuss on Carrion's foreign policy strategy for 2005-2020. Ponce, a career diplomat, expressed concern over damage done to Ecuador's foreign policy under the Gutierrez government, and confirmed that Carrion had asked him to develop a document charting Ecuadorian foreign policy through 2020. Ponce said that he and FM Carrion are friends, having served under him in Madrid. Ponce said he and MOD Oswaldo Jarrin worked together at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), and that the MFA's document would be coordinated closely with Jarrin's announced white paper on security issues.

¶3. (SBU) Ponce's earlier efforts, as head of the MFA's AFSA equivalent, included a project to encourage greater analysis in the MFA. He did so by incorporating in the MFA's officer evaluation process, a requirement for a paper foreign policy topics, suggesting specific attention to U.S.-Ecuador Relations, National Security, and Colombia-Ecuador Relations. The program was a great success, according to Ponce, with 30 of the first 100 papers submitted to academic journals in Spain and Ecuador.

¶4. (SBU) Ponce is now planning to inform the 2020 strategy drafting process, which will culminate in a draft strategic document, by convoking a series of seminars on topics along similar lines, and has requested USG assistance in securing U.S. experts on Latin America to participate in the seminar on U.S.-Ecuador relations in early January. The seminars will include a variety of sectors and perspectives, encouraging open dialogue between them.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Ponce told us that the FM's "ulterior motive" for this series of seminars is to encourage social and political dialogue on foreign policy issues, and build consensual support for a long-term vision of Ecuador's external goals. We find the effort refreshing in the current difficult political situation, and will consider ways to support it.

JEWELL